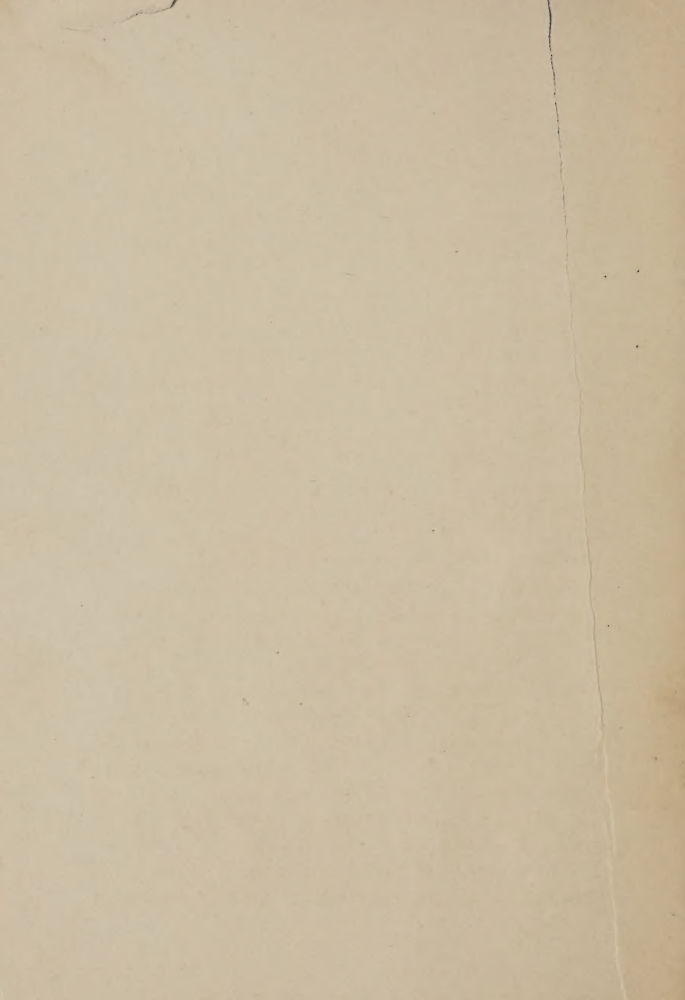


THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,
COMMONLY
CALLED QUAKERS.

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THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

There are many persons who may occasionally have attended a "Quakers' Meeting," and others who are brought into contact with members of this Society in various ways, who yet appear but little acquainted with the religious principles professed by them. The question is accordingly often asked, "What are the Quakers, and what do they believe?" The object of this little tract is to give, very briefly, an outline of their Christian principles, and in so doing, to refer the reader to Holy Scripture in confirmation of them.

In the first place, as to the name, "Quakers." It was given to members of this Society two hundred years ago, by a persecuting magistrate at Derby, because George Fox, an eminent minister of that day, "bid him tremble at the word of the Lord." The name was at once adopted as a term of ridicule; but they have always been known amongst themselves by the endearing name of "Friends."

The Society of Friends believe in GOD THE FATHER, Almighty, the Maker and Preserver of

all men ; and in His SON, JESUS CHRIST, our Lord, and in the HOLY SPIRIT, the Comforter. They believe that Jesus Christ came into the world, took our nature upon Him, and “tasted death for every man ;” being a perfect sacrifice for sin, and a perfect example and pattern to His people in all ages ;—that none can be saved from sin in any other way than by “repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” They also believe that “He ascended up on high,” that “He sitteth on the right hand of God,” and that “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.”

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—John iii. 16.

Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.—Acts iv. 12.

For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.—I Timothy ii. 5.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.—I John iv. 10.

Friends believe, also, that as Christ died for all men, so has a measure of light been given to all, by the operation of the Holy Spirit on their hearts and consciences ; and that there is not a human being in the world who has not been visited by this light, or who has not, in a

measure, God's law written in the heart. They believe that it is the Holy Spirit alone who can convince the world of sin, or bear witness in the hearts of any, to the pardoning love of God, through Jesus Christ.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.—John i. 9.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—Titus ii. 11-14.

Friends believe in the Divine inspiration and authority of the Old and New Testament, and “that they are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” They regard it as a great blessing that they are now so freely circulated; and it is a duty they enjoin on all their members to “search them daily,” with earnest desires for the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.—II Timothy iii. 16, 17.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.—II Peter i. 21.

Friends have always regarded the public worship of Almighty God as an inestimable privilege, as well as a bounden duty. They therefore meet *publicly* “on the first day of the week,” and also on some day in the middle of the week; yet they believe that when assembled together, it is not necessary that any form of singing, prayer, or preaching should be gone through, to enable them to perform acceptable worship, but that the worship of God “in spirit and in truth” may be without words at all. The worshipper is the creature; the object of worship is the Creator of all things;—the one weak and sinful, the other Almighty, and “of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.” Believing it to be the good pleasure of our heavenly Father that every man should have access to Him, through Jesus Christ, by the one Spirit, Friends believe it right to wait in silence before Him when publicly assembled, that each believer may for himself offer the sacrifice of “a broken and contrite heart,” be prepared with offerings of prayer and praise, and receive the spiritual food most convenient for him. They refer with comfort to many passages of scripture in confirmation of this practice.

Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.—Psalm xxv. 5.

Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.—Psalm xvii. 14.

Be still, and know that I am God.—Psalm xlv. 10.

My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.—Psalm lxii. 5.

Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.—Psalm cxxiii. 2.

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.—Isaiah xxv. 9.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.—John iv. 23, 24.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.—John vi. 63.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.—Romans viii. 26.

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.—1 John ii. 27.

Friends believe in the supreme authority and continued administration of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the head of the church; and that no worship ought now to be made dependent upon the presence of any one man or order of men—no service or stated vocal utterance in the congregation, ought to be allowed to interfere with the operations of the Lord's free Spirit. They thankfully recognize, as a means of edification, the preaching of the Gospel, and offerings of public prayer or thanksgiving, under the renewed anointing of the Holy Ghost; but they dare not make these dependent upon human arrangements, or exclude by any such arrangements, the unseen but not unfelt ministrations of the Spirit of Christ dividing to every man severally, as He will. According to the declaration of the apostle, that "in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female," Friends believe that Christian women, as well as men, may be called to the work of the ministry.

Whilst they believe that those who are called to be ministers among them should be "esteemed very highly for their work's sake," yet, seeing that the gifts of God cannot be purchased with money, their ministers are not paid for their services. They consider such payments tend to interfere with the faithful preaching of the truth, and that they are contrary to the

example of Christ's apostles. A reference to the Acts of the Apostles will show that the Apostle Paul, although charged with so great a commission, did not disdain, for years together, to labor with "his own hands," that he "might be chargeable to no man." Nevertheless, when any of their ministers are called, by religious duty, to leave their homes and preach the gospel either in their own country or in foreign lands, their brethren cheerfully supply them with the needful means.

Freely ye have received, freely give.—Matthew x. 8.

I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.—Acts xx. 33, 34, 35.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Christ Jesus, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.—1 Peter iv. 10, 11.

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.—1 Peter v. 2, 3.

Friends believe in the "One Baptism" of the Spirit, and that the true baptism which can save the soul is not the outward washing with water, but that cleansing and purifying of the Holy Spirit, so often promised as the peculiar blessing of the gospel dispensation; and that the "outward sign" may too often be a substitute for the "inward and spiritual grace." Submission to this work of the Holy Spirit is a consequence of the true reception of Christ as our Saviour.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.—Matthew iii. 11, 12.

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.—1 Peter iii. 21.

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward men appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.—Titus iii. 4, 5.

With regard to the observance usually called the "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," Friends believe that communion with Christ is not to be had by eating bread and drinking wine, or

any outward performance, practiced, too, perhaps only a few times during the year. But they do believe that unless a man truly, and in a spiritual sense, “eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, he hath no life in him.” They believe this privilege is to be enjoyed, not in the performance of an outward ceremony, nor exclusively in a place of worship, but that all who, in every place, hear and obey the voice of their Lord and Master, do indeed sup with Him, according to His promise in the book of Revelations: “Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

Friends regard the eating of the passover supper by our Lord and His disciples, when He broke bread and drank of the cup, as the fulfilment of a Jewish ordinance, and that the observance is no more binding than the service of “washing one another’s feet,” which appears to have been enjoined in quite as plain terms as the other ceremony; yet almost all Christians have disused the practice of washing each other’s feet. Though Friends fully maintain the truths these rites are designed to embody, they believe that their value consists in their being understood in a spiritual sense, such as is evidently indicated in the following passages:—

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.—John vi. 32-35.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.—John vi. 51-56.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.—John vi. 63.

Most people are aware that the Society of Friends object to the use of *all* OATHS, even in a court of law. Their conscientious scruples in this particular have been so far respected by the legislature of this country, that they are excused from taking oaths in all cases where it is required of others, and are allowed to make an affirmation instead. Friends believe that the commands of our Saviour against the use of oaths are so plain and positive, that they can do no other than yield obedience to them.

Again ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.—Matthew v. 33-37.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.—James v. 12.

Friends believe WAR to be utterly opposed to the Gospel of Christ, and therefore unlawful to the Christian. They believe that the teaching of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and that of His apostles, is calculated to lead men from a trust in “an arm of flesh” to an entire dependence upon God; and true Christians well know that “all things work together for good to them that love God,” and so are delivered from that slavish fear of man, which leads to the use of weapons of warfare. Seeing, too, that the apostle declares that the weapons of the Christian's warfare “are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds,” Friends believe that the evils of the world can never be cured by force of arms, or social or religious liberty promoted thereby.

They think they are acting out both the letter and spirit of the New Testament in refusing under any circumstances to bear arms, believing that "no weapons of defense will be found so effectual in promoting the good of all mankind as the exercise of Christian forbearance in the suffering of injuries, the absence of revenge, the return of good for evil, and the ever-operating love of God and man."

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.—Matthew v. 43, 44.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.—Matthew vii. 12.

And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.—Luke x. 27.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.—Romans xii. 19, 20, 21.

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.—James i. 20.

And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.—I John iv. 21.

Members of the Society of Friends no doubt are often considered singular in using “thee” and “thou” in the place of “you,” and also in not giving complimentary titles to their fellow-men. They believe it to be more scriptural to do so; and that plain and truthful speaking is enjoined by the spirit and precepts of Christ and His apostles. And although they prescribe no form of dress or speech as a condition of membership, they enjoin upon their members the practice of simplicity and truthfulness, as becoming the Christian, and that those forms of speech which tend to flattery, exaggeration, and untruthfulness, should be avoided. Vain compliments, superfluous or gay apparel, they discountenance, as inconsistent with the simplicity of a Christian life.

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.—Matthew xxiii. 8.

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.—Romans xii. 9.

For the fruit of the spirit is all goodness and righteousness and truth.—Ephesians v. 9.

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.—Philippians iv. 5.

Whoso adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.—1 Peter iii. 3, 4.

Thus the reader is presented with a very brief view of some of the Christian principles of the Society of Friends, or "Quakers;" and he is affectionately invited to "Search the Scriptures" for himself, and "see whether these things are so."

It may be proper to explain, for the information of some who ask, "May any one attend a Quaker's meeting?" that their places of worship are open as publicly as those of any other denomination; and that the company of any who may be disposed to attend their meetings is always acceptable.

In nearly every Friends' meeting-house there is a library of books, explanatory of their principles; and should any person be desirous of further information on them, he may obtain the loan of such books gratuitously.

W.